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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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~ Atari Flashback 2 Out! ~ People Are Talking! ~ PasswordKeeper 2000
~ Brit Phisher Sentenced ~ Web Anonymity Case! ~ GFA Basic Editor!
~ Mac OS X Is Updated! ~ Oracle's Free Database ~ Bird Flu Virus!
~ Windows Version Online ~ Atari Project Status! ~ Case Bails Out!

-* Vintage Computer Festival 8! *-
-* Red Hat Outlines Future for Linux! *-
-* Microsoft May Expand Web-Based Offerings! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

First the hurricanes, next the snow squalls. What's next on the list, earthquakes and tornadoes?? Throughout the latter part of last week, we heard weather reports of the possibility of a few flakes of snow, mixed in with rain, in areas of higher elevation. Well, where I am situated, it's certainly not that elevated. My neighbor and I were out last Saturday, cleaning up leaves. I was out no more than 10 minutes when I saw a couple of flakes. Right on cue. We looked at each other, shrugged our shoulders, and kept on working. Fifteen minutes later, I drove the tractor back into the shed - the snow was coming down like it was mid-January! The next day, the sun was shining, the temperatures were in the 60's, and I finished the lawn! One weekend missing a fall clean-up, and it's hell to catch up!

This has been one bad week, and I'm beat. Our upcoming accreditation survey notwithstanding, a lot of stress. One of our department colleagues passed away one day; another's mother on the next, and then the mother of one of my supervisors on the third day. What a week. I just got back from one wake, and another one coming up. I'm not good with these things. So, here I am, trying to get my mind back where it belongs, and get things finished up here.

Until next time...

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http://projectstatus.atari.org

I've created a web page that will list the status of active ATARI computer hardware projects. The intent is to have one place we can go to find the status of 8-bit and ST(e)-Falcon-TT active hardware projects. Of course, this can only be successful if you provide me with information. If you would like your project listed, please contact me (remove obvious spam filter) with the correct information and current status. I will not list e-mail addresses unless requested; only web pages. In addition, if I've listed incorrect information or if you would like your project removed, please contact me. The URL: http://projectstatus.atari.org

You may also contact me through my home page at http://www.josephplace.com

Thanks, and stay ATARI!
--
Joseph D. Place
ATARI FalconCT60, 1040STE, STacy4, Portfolio, 130XE, 400
http://www.josephplace.com

GFA-Basic Editor v1.30 Released

Hi,

Please follow the last link in the signature for downloading.

To many changes to note here, please read the docs included in the archive.

Especially want to thank the guys at Run Software (Ingo & Holger) for their testing and bug reporting, and also Gokmase.

--
FreeMiNT http://sparemint.atariforge.net/sparemint/ [Free your mind...]
Atari Team http://setiathome.berkeley.edu/team_display.php?teamid=30472
L. Pursell http://www.bright.net/~gfabasic/ [AtarIRC, GFA-Basic, Hades060]

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!

Vintage Computer Festival 8.0 Event Guide

Vintage Computer Festival 8.0
Saturday & Sunday, November 5-6
Computer History Museum
Mountain View, California
http://www.vintage.org/2005/main/

This is your complete VCF 8.0 event guide! Vintage Computer Festival 8.0 happens this coming Saturday and Sunday, November 5th and 6th, at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California.

The doors open at 9:30am each day. Speaker sessions begin at 10:00am and run until 2:00pm. The exhibit and marketplace open at 2:00pm and run until 6:00pm.

Admission is $12 per person per day for full event access, including

the speakers, exhibits and marketplace, or $7 per person per day for exhibit and marketplace only (exhibit and marketplace open at 2:00pm each day). Parking is free, and kids 17 and under are admitted free of charge.

Homebrew Computer Club Retrospective

The VCF in conjunction with the DigiBarn Computer Museum is proud to present a 30th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Homebrew Computer Club, the legendary Silicon Valley institution that helped to launch the era of the personal computer. Bruce Damer of the DigiBarn Computer Museum will moderate this panel of former Homebrew members, including Steve Wozniak, Lee Felsenstein, Allen Baum, Len Shustek, Bob Lash and Michael Holley.

Join the panel as they recount their experiences and gab with the group as we feast on some yummy cake, courtesy of the DigiBarn:

http://www.digibarn.org/

VCF 8.0 Speaker Schedule

The speaker schedule for VCF 8.0 is as follows:

Saturday, November 5

Time	Session Title	Speaker(s)
10:00am	Film Screening: The Future of Pinball	Greg Maletic
11:00am	IOCCC Award Presentation Ceremony	Landon Curt Noll
12:00pm	VCF Shenanigans	Sellam Ismail
1:00pm	Homebrew Computer Club Retrospective Join us in a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Homebrew Computer Club. Moderated by Bruce Damer of the DigiBarn.	Steve Wozinak Lee Felsenstein Len Shustek Michael Holley Bob Lash Allen Baum

Sunday, November 6

Time	Session Title	Speaker(s)
10:00am	A History of the Smart Card	Jerry Svigals
11:00am	Yack 'N Hack: Computers Talk Back	Deborah Norling
12:00pm	A Personal Re-telling of Personal Computer Retailing	Dave Freeman
12:30pm	Nerd Trivia Challenge! Are you up to the Challenge? Hosted by Evan Koblentz, editor of the Computer Collector Newsletter	Evan Koblentz and three Uber Nerds vying for the prize!
1:00pm	In The Beginning: A BBS History	Christian Wirth

Discussion		Joe Russack Ernie Longmire
A panel discussion to follow-up the screening of BBS Documentary on day one of the VCF. Moderated by director Jason Scott.		

For complete details on this year's speaker series including session abstracts and speaker biographies, visit:

http://www.vintage.org/2005/main/speaker.php

Nerd Trivia Challenge

The Nerd Trivia Challenge is a trivia contest to test the knowledge of the most serious computer history buffs. Contestants are chosen from VCF attendees who qualify for play by taking a preliminary quiz upon arrival at the VCF on Saturday, November 5. Those applicants scoring highest on the preliminary quiz will be selected to compete in the Nerd Trivia Challenge on Sunday, November 6, at 12:30pm.

The Nerd Trivia Challenge is being hosted by Evan Koblentz, editor of the Computer Collector Newsletter:

http://news.computercollector.com

To participate in the Nerd Trivia Challenge, ask to take the NTC preliminary quiz when you arrive at the VCF registration desk.

Film Screenings

The VCF is proud to present the first ever public screening of a new documentary film titled "The Future of Pinball":

http://www.thefutureofpinball.com

The Future of Pinball is a new documentary on the recent history of the pinball industry. The showing is a beta version of the film and VCF attendees will have a chance to help direct the final cut based on the feedback they provide.

Be sure to catch director Greg Maletic's talk on Saturday, November 5, at 10:00am.

The VCF will also be reprising a screening of BBS Documentary:

http://www.bbsdocumentary.com

The screening will take place on Saturday, November 5, and the film will be shown in its entirety to all VCF attendees. On Sunday, November 6, join director Jason Scott and three of the subjects from the film at the BBS history panel at 1:00pm.

Tours and Excursions

Guided tours of the Computer History Museum Visible Storage collection will be conducted on Saturday, November 5, with Visible Storage open for self-guided tours on Sunday, November 6.

For those interested in touring the DigiBarn Computer Museum, curator

Bruce Damer will lead an excursion into the Santa Cruz mountains that will disembark from the VCF at 3:00pm.

Complete details and tour times are available on the VCF 8.0 website:

   http://www.vintage.org/2005/main/tours.php

Bring On The Exhibits!

Once again the VCF has attracted some rather fascinating exhibits. Check out what we've got in store for VCF 8.0:

   http://www.vintage.org/2005/main/exhibit.php

We look forward to having you at the Vintage Computer Festival. I'll see you there!

Best regards,

Sellam Ismail
Producer
Vintage Computer Festival

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's going to be a short-ish column again this week. The quantity of messages is dwindling again, and one can only hope that the quality of the messages will make up for it.

We've talked before about the dwindling message count, and about the fact that Atari hasn't made a computer in so many years, but for some reason it still disappoints me to see the quantity as low as it is.

Now, there's another reason that this column is going to be short. I don't seem to be all fired up about anything... at least not enough to rant and rave like I usually do.

So without further adieu, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info available on the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
==========

Melvin Stoten asks about attaching Zip drives and compact flash cards to an ST:

"Are there any instructions on the net for hooking up
Zip drives and Compact Flash cards to STs? Any

suggestions about using these items with STs?"

Uwe Seimet tells Melvin:

"There is not much to be considered here. ZIP drives work out of the box when using an adapter like the Link96/97. Most SCSI CF card adapters should also work with this adapter. In the past some users have already posted their experiences with CF card adapters here, so it is probably a good idea to check older postings from this group."

Pawel Kaznowski asks a rather interesting question:

"The Question is simple, what happen if instead of Eiffel I add connector for original Atari Keyboard, should I use SWITCH for TxD RxD signals or can you just connect both to eiffel and to the connector?

So, what happens if I connect EIFFEL and an ATARI KEYBOARD?"

'Chris' asks Pawel:

"Why bother using Eiffel is you are not going to use the keyboard??"

Mike Freeman tells Chris:

"Possibly in order to use a PC mouse while still using the Atari keyboard without having an awkward mouse adapter dangling off the computer or keyboard. This was my question at one time, as well. I would love to be able to have the option of using the PC mouse connector of Eiffel while still using my MSTe keyboard. I personally prefer that keyboard (my favorite keyboard Atari ever made) to a PC keyboard, because there's no key remapping to be done, so I wouldn't have to try to keep track of where the Undo key went. I saw one of the PC mouse adapters that go between the Atari connector and the connector end of the mouse in action. Looked quite awkward, and wouldn't work well in my situation. So to have my MSTe keyboard and a PC mouse connected, I'd have to have something like this. Picky, I know, but it would *really* be a nice feature for Eiffel, if it were possible!"

Chris replies:

"Hmmm, sounds like a Job for PeST to me."

Mike tells Chris:

"No. PeST would not do the job as I described it in my last post. PeST plugs into the existing mouse port (which is on my MSTe keyboard), then goes to a PS/2 plug on the end of a go-between cable, which then plugs into the mouse. That's exactly what I'm trying to avoid!

What I would love to see is an adapter board, like Eiffel, that plugs directly into the motherboard, which I can mount to my case (I have a PC tower re-case). This board would give me a plug for my MSTe keyboard and a plug for a PS/2 mouse, so the mouse can plug directly into the machine rather than having a chain of adapters that get smashed,

unplugged, etc.

PeST is exactly the same as other adapters I've seen in action that I didn't like the looks of. I want something I can plug a PS/2 mouse into without a go-between cable, while still being able to use my MSTe keyboard.

The only other option would be something along the lines of using the Atari end of PeST, cutting off the PS/2 end of the mouse, and wiring it directly into PeST. Kind of a pain, but I suppose it would work that way. I'd still prefer what I described above, though."

Techie Alison tells Mike:

"This is quite a tall order, somewhat akin to plugging two RS232 modems into a single RS232 port.

It works like this; you have the MSTE keyboard which is the modem, and the Atari which is the RS232 port. And then the extra mouse you speak of has to be connected to the same RS232 port. It simply won't work because of handshaking. In that the signals for each device will conflict as the design is a direct communication protocol.

The only solution here would be an adapter board which manages and allows such handshaking.

I do have a hack idea to overcome this however but it would de-standardise the machine. That idea would be to dismantle your MSTE keyboard, wire up a PeST inside to the mouse port, replace the MSTE's cable with one containing a greater number of cores, run the PS2 DATA and CLOCK signals back to the where the cable plugs into the ST, and end up with a socket coming out of the lead where the keyboard plugs into the system unit."

Ronald Hall asks a question about TOS 2.06 ROMs:

"This one could be a toughie. Can anyone tell me where pin #1 is located on the high and low TOS 2.06 ROM chips?"

Alison tells Ronald:

"There ye go;
http://www.ma plin.co.uk/Media/product_pdfs/aw34.pdf
<http://www.maplin.co.uk/Media/product_pdfs/aw34.pdf>

Can't say fairer than that.

Just in case you're on an ST only and pdf's are a problem, the layout of this rather digested dram follows similar conventions, pin 1 is always upper left with the notch on the top;

```
      ------\_/------
  A8 |1          16| GND
    D |2          15| CAS
  WE |3          14| Q
  RAS |4          13| A6
  A0 |5          12| A3
```

```
  A2 |6          11| A4
  A1 |7          10| A5
  Vcc |8          9| A7
      ---------------
```
"

Ronald tells Alison:

"Hmph. You made that look too easy! <big grin>

Thanks though Alison! I've got a Compatibility Plus 2 board that I'm trying to figure out. I don't have any docs with it, and when it came time to insert the ROMs...well... I was just guessing and couldn't get it to work. I just hope I didn't kill my ROMs. According to Brad at Best Electronics, if I had them in the wrong way, I might have already destroyed them."

Chris tells Ronald:

"if your board has been made "to the norm" then pin 1 will be a square solder pad on the pcb, all the others will be round."

Alison adds this:

"The notch at the top of the chip will also match up against an indentation/notch at the top of the socket."

Ronald tells Alison and Chris:

"Hmm, I take it that you and Chris haven't actually seen the Compatibility Plus 2 board? (not meaning to step on toes here - just wondering!).

Because its a marvel in size. There is only one regular socket (or at least what I'm used to seeing as a socket). The 68000 CPU sits in it, on top. Now if you can imagine, flip it over, and *in between* the pins that will go into the normal CPU socket on my Mega, is where the 2 TOS 2.06 ROMs sit. There is not a regular socket, just holes in the pcb board for the pins of the ROM chips. Very small, very tight. No markings in the pcb at all, and as far as I can see, no difference in the holes for the pins.

There are no EO/E1 or HI/LO or HIGH/LOW markings at all. I've been able to get some of the docs (but not nearly all). Here is a paragraph:

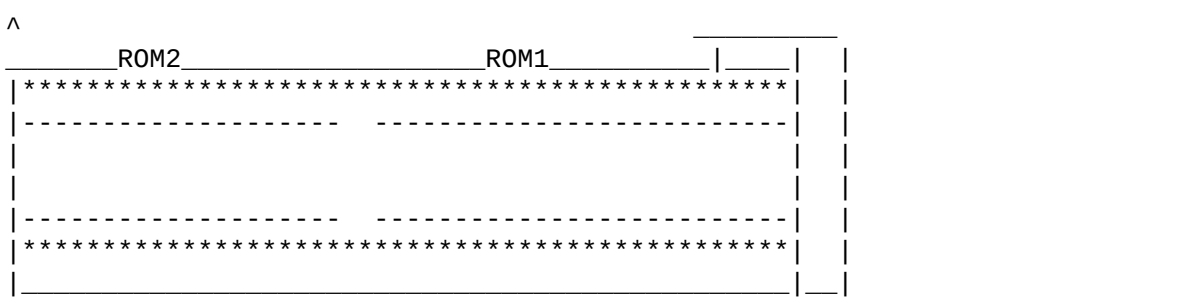
"According to the instructions, facing the bottom of the Board, you insert the 2 TOS 2.06 Roms Pin # 1's in the opposite 180 degree direction of the #1 pin on the 68000 CPU. Look for the Words Rom 1 and Rom 2 (top edge of the bottom of the board) on the bottom of the Compatibility Plus 2 board, Pin # 1 for the ROM 1 is in the upper right corner of the Board and so on for the ROM 2 behind it"

The board looks like this:

Bottom view:

(the caret shows where pin number 1 on the 68000 chip is. (top of

the board, flip side)



* = pins from board, that go into the motherboard
- = holes for TOS 2.06 ROMs

Excuse my poor attempts at drawing. :-(

So...Is ROM1 the Hi or Lo TOS 2.06 ROM? Is ROM2 the Hi or Lo 2.06 ROM? Its easy to take either ROM and put pin #1 (thanks to your guys info)of either chip in the upper right hand corner, but which TOS ROM goes there? Its confusing to me with no docs/pictures in hand. :-(

Sadly, according to what I've been told if I get it wrong (which I already tried once) the TOS ROM chips may be destroyed.

I wish I knew someone who had one setup so I could compare."

Alison tells Ronald:

"Ahhhh, I see now. Well, if you put the roms in the wrong sockets, say TOS1 in TOS2, and TOS2 in TOS1, then it won't blow them up at all, no way!! (i think..) All that'll happen is just that it won't work. As from the board's point of few they'll be containing firmware and data which is gibberish.

As for which is actually ROM1 and which is ROM2, I'm not sure. But what I can say, is that if they're in the wrong way round it just won't work. There'll be no electrical conflict, just that the computer won't do anything.

When I upgraded my MSTE to TOS 2.06 I faced a similar problem as they're not marked either, it just says U206 and U207 (just checked at time of writing this). TOS1 went in TOS2, and TOS2 in TOS1.

@CHRIS@ What's your feeling on this about getting the chips in the wrong sockets??

Actually, going back to that pin1 thing again, the way to truly confirm it is to trace the GND and +5v back. You'll need to find out the pinouts of the 68000 so you can confirm it, unless there's a ˆ ´– flylead coming off or similar."

Chris jumps in and tells Alison/Ronald:

"What ron needs to do is get a multimeter, find your +5V rail (assuming it comes from the ST PSU) and measure each of the rom pins until you get a reading (beep setting would be good) it is possible that you will have more than 1 pin connected to 5V, though most are address lines so

they be connected. If you can work out what pins are connected to 5V then you are half way there.

Getting HI/LO the wrong way does not kill them, I can't remember exactly what it does, but I think you get vertical lines down the screen or some odd thing like that.... I would get your roms checked out too if possible. If you have blown them up then they are probably unreadable. I have TOS206 images on my old P200 in my workshop. There are 2 checksums though (I think I only have the one) this is because some roms have FF in blank space and some have 00 for blank space, hence depending where you get your roms from could be either checksum. No chance if these are patched roms of any kind."

Ram Meenaks asks a rather interesting question about the possibility of reading cartridges on a PC:

"I have an Atari ST hardware that connects via the ROM cartridge port on the Atari. I would dearly like to connect the hardware to a PC and use it via an emulator (even if the current emulators don't support this, I don't mind changing the code). Is there anything out there that will allow me to use this peripheral on the PC? Any type of Atari Cartridge-to-PC bridge? Ideally connecting to an USB-port would be great. Sorry if this is a newbie (or FAQ) question. I don't have an Atari ST and don't plan on getting one. But, I would still like to use the hardware..."

'Chris' tells Ram:

"The PC is totally different technology. It would be like you trying to connect a USB device to a ST back in the early 80's.

If you get the support of someone who writes a emulator, someone who can build the hardware adapter then its possible. Its probably that the cart would have to be converted into something the PC can understand like USB, so first you have to convert your cart to a USB device. You then have to write I/O drives for the PC so it can read and understand the new USB device. You then have to get the emulator to access the new hardware via new api calls or whatever.

You don't say what the cart is, whatever it is I doubt its of much importance, if its just roms, then you could read them in a eprom programer and make a cart image file for use in emulators. Can't see those few K of data being of much help tho. My advice to you use buy a ST and use your cart how it was intended to be used. Either that or save up a lot of ˆ ´£ˆ ´£ˆ ´£ and pay a commercial software/hardware developer at least ˆ ´£100 per hour to make it do what you want."

Alison adds:

"...The Atari cartridge port is actually relatively simple. All that's involved is getting the I/O in the right place and at the right time and it'd work.

It's only a case of mapping 1's and 0's back n forth. The ROMs in those are about 250ns which is 4MIPS / 4Mhz. Today's PC's could swallow that in an instant.

Nice to dream about these things but not gonna happen, kind of disappointing that is, that we're capable of so much yet do so little.

Best get an ST then Ram. Sorry."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Atari Flashback 2!
Call of Duty 2!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Call of Duty 2: Big Red One Ships

Pay attention soldier! Activision, Inc. has shipped Call of Duty 2: Big Red One to stores nationwide, putting players in the boots of the highly decorated WWII heroes in the U.S. Army's famed Fighting 1st Infantry Division, known the world over as The Big Red One. Developed by Treyarch, players are dropped into the most epic and legendary WWII story ever played. In a departure for the Call of Duty franchise, players will get to know their squadmates more than ever before as they fight alongside a single squad to accomplish a variety of missions spanning from Northern Africa to Nazi-occupied Western Europe. Call of Duty 2: Big Red One - rated "T" (TEEN - blood, mild language and violence) by the ESRB - is now available for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system, Xbox video game system from Microsoft and Nintendo GameCube for a suggested retail price of $49.99.

"As a highly decorated unit that served in a variety of combat theaters, The Big Red One offered plenty of action, heroism, danger and grit for us to draw from during the creation of the game," said Christian Busic, Creative Director, Treyarch. "We were able to take the 'No One Fights Alone' theme from the Call of Duty series and create an even more personal experience for players by following one member of a single squad through some of the epic encounters and amazing battles that defined the war."

Through the game's enhanced A.I. - an A.I. system tailored from the

original award-winning PC game adapted specifically for play on consoles - squads maximize use of environmental cover and tactical maneuvers, such as flanking, envelopment and fire-and-maneuver behaviors. Additionally, Treyarch employs a new context-sensitive battle chatter system allowing players to hear their squadmates bark helpful orders, updates and communicate as events unfold in the heat of battle. As the missions continue, the A.I. will also harden squad members, maturing their performance skills on the battlefield over time as they become more experienced in combat.

From the blistering desert expanses of Tunisia and Algeria to the skies of Northern Africa and the deadly countrysides of Italy, France, Belgium and Germany, the story follows the actual route of the Big Red One through Operation Torch (North Africa), Operation Husky (Italy), and Operation Overlord (Europe). With new territories come new enemies, including the Vichy French and the Italian Fascists, as well as a host of more than three dozen authentic American, Italian, French and German weapons, all of which are based on actual working models - some so rare, that they've never before been seen even in some of Hollywood's biggest war epics.

"Cinematic intensity and the chaos of battle return with Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, an authentic WWII story that captures the camaraderie and heroism of the real members of the US Army's 1st Infantry Division," said Dusty Welch, vice president of global brand management, Activision, Inc. "Treyarch delivers amazing detail in each mission, and by working with military advisors and conducting extensive research, has brought the authentic stories and bravery of the Big Red One to life on consoles."

Call of Duty 2: Big Red One players may go online for intense Axis vs. Allies team-based multiplayer action on Xbox Live and PlayStation2 Online. The game features four modes of play: Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Domination and Capture the Flag for up to 16 players. Additionally, multiplayer mode offers access to exclusive weapons and maps, as well as vehicle gameplay. For more information, visit http://www.CallofDuty.com.

A limited Collector's Edition of Call of Duty 2: Big Red One is also now available for $59.99. The Collector's Edition includes additional content on the game DVD, featuring interviews with actual members of the Big Red One Fighting 1st Infantry Division, commentaries, a special making of the game feature, bonus footage and more.

Brady Games' Call of Duty 2: Big Red One Official Strategy Guide is available at electronics, book, and software retailers nationwide, and online at http://bradygames.com.

Call of Duty 2: Big Red One will also be featured in an upcoming half-hour special that celebrates the history of America's most decorated fighting unit, The Big Red One, as well as the making of the highly-anticipated first-person- action game. "The Big Red One: Behind the Game" will premiere November 1 at 9:00 pm/EST on the Military Channel. Doing its part to help add to the historical authenticity of the game, The Military Channel has also produced a series of historical vignettes that are featured in the game.

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Atari Celebrates 30th Anniversary of Home Edition of Pong with Atari Flashback 2

Latest Plug-and-Play Console Ships to Stores, Reviving Classic Favorites

In celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the home edition of Pong, the world's first mass market video game, Atari, Inc. announced its latest classic gaming console, Atari Flashback 2 is available now nationwide for a suggested price of $29.99. The second installment of the plug-and-play series succeeds last year's highly acclaimed retro-gaming console, which shipped more than 500,000 units to retail, and features 40 original classic games, including Pong, Asteroids, Centipede, and Combat. Atari Flashback 2 is styled after the Atari 2600 system, complete with its infamous wood grain paneling and joysticks.

"Atari Flashback 2 offers consumers all the original gems of video games - Pong, Pitfall, Asteroids - making it the ultimate re-creation of the classic gaming experience," said Marc Metis, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Atari, Inc. "The appeal of the Atari Flashback 2.0 transcends all ages, and makes it an especially appealing choice for gifts this holiday season."

The Atari Flashback 2 showcases 20 original 2600 games, as well as 20 unreleased Atari games, and features an engineered modern chip technology that allows use of the original Atari 2600 code directly. The system will plug right into any TV using RCA cables, and will not only utilize the joysticks included, but will be backwards compatible with all other Atari 2600 controllers as well.

The Atari Flashback 2 is rated 'E' for Everyone and is available at retail stores nationwide.

Free Chapters from the New Commodore Book

Sample chapters from the book, "On the Edge: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore" are now online. Read how Commodore fought with Apple, IBM, Atari and Sinclair.

HTML or Adobe Acrobat PDF files are available from the table of contents:

http://www.commodorebook.com/view.php?content=toc

Title: On the Edge: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore
Pages: 458
ISBN 0-9738649-0-7
Hardcover

Variant Press

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Case Bails on Time Warner

America Online Inc. co-founder Steve Case said Monday he is resigning from Time Warner Inc.'s board of directors.

Case, who co-founded America Online in the mid-1980s, later orchestrated AOL's $112 billion merger with Time Warner in January 2001.

But as shareholder value plummeted in the wake of the merger, Case, in 2003, stepped down from his role as chairman of Time Warner's board but retained a seat on the board.

Case said Monday that he was leaving the board completely to focus on his new role as chairman and CEO of Revolution LLC, a Washington, D.C.-based health care and resorts investment firm he launched in April.

As a Time Warner shareholder, Case said he would continue to stay active in AOL.

"I will remain actively engaged as strategies for AOL's future are considered, and as steps are taken to maximize Time Warner shareholder value," said Case, in a statement.

Case also noted, in his statement, that he was encouraged by a "renewed focus" in AOL.

In recent months, AOL has been rumored as a possible acquisition target of companies including Google Inc., Microsoft Corp., and Yahoo Inc.

Apple Releases Mac OS X 10.4.3

Apple on Monday released an update for Mac OS X, bringing both the client and server versions of the operating system to 10.4.3. Among the changes in the update are improvements to Safari, Mail, iChat and Apple's desktop searching tool, Spotlight.

Apple's Internet Web browser Safari can now pass The Web Standards Project Acid2 test and the update has improved the compatibility of Safari with many webcams. Compatibility for OpenGL-accelerated Macromedia Shockwave 3D webpage content has also been improved.

Several networking issues with SMB volumes have been addressed fixing problems where a volume might not mount after it s been unmounted.

Changes in the Finder include improving responsiveness during Spotlight searches and Spotlight comments entered in the Finder are now preserved

when using iDisk syncing. The update also addressed an issue in which Spotlight cannot find a file after using iPhoto to rename it if the filename originally contained an ampersand, according to Apple.

With Mac OS X 10.4.3, you no longer need to store Address Book contact URLs in the Notes field when syncing with .Mac. In addition, Address Book contacts organized in subgroups can be synced to an iPod using iTunes.

Apple's Mail application received quite a few improvements with this update. IMAP users will no longer be prompted to download attachments more than once; Smart Groups can now be dragged from Address Book to the To, Cc, or Bcc field; Smart Mailboxes that use Entire Message Contains and another criteria with the any qualifier now work as expected; and Searches of All Mailboxes can now, optionally, include items from Junk and Trash.

iChat, Apple's messaging application, will now allow .Mac members to enable encrypted chat sessions. The update also resolves an issue in Activity Monitor in which you might see iChatAgent (Not Responding) in red text, even though iChat works just fine. Mac OS X 10.4.3 addresses a No data has been received for the last 10 seconds alert that could often appear when participating in a video chat in iChat with someone using AIM on a PC.

Other applications have been updated with the release including Disk Utility, which can now verify the Mac OS X 10.4 startup volume; Keychain Access searching is no longer case-sensitive; X11 windows no longer stay in the background after selecting the X11 application from the Dock or with Application Switcher; and an issue was addressed in which Preview might only print the first page of a multipage TIFF document.

More information on Mac OS X 10.4.3 will be available from Apple's Web site. As MacCentral posted this article, the 10.4.3 update was available through the Software Update system preference pane but not from Apple's Web site.

Mac OS X Server 10.4.3 includes improvements for AFP, SMB/CIFS, NFS and FTP file sharing protocols; file system permissions and group membership updates; NIS, Active Directory integration and home directory creation; mail services when hosting thousands of user accounts; Weblog authentication and RSS2 compatibility; Software Update server notifications and package synchronization; serving files larger than 64k with Apache; reliably starting MySQL at system startup; software RAID reliability during creation and rebuilding; Workgroup Manager, System Image Utility applications; compatibility with third party applications and devices; and previous standalone security updates.

Oracle Releases Free Database

Oracle has announced the release of a free starter edition of its database software. The release is targeted at application developers, database administrators, and students.

The Oracle Database 10g Express Edition, also called Oracle Database XE, also will be free to independent software vendors and hardware vendors that want to embed the database in their own applications or products.

The company has noted that these specific groups often seek out low-cost or no-cost database systems to get started in development or to learn the

basics of database applications.

By providing the XE version, Oracle hopes to give them a low-risk way to dabble in databases and potentially upgrade to other Oracle products at a later date.

Oracle Database XE is built on the 10g Release 2 code base, making it fully compatible with the rest of the company's product portfolio.

"Users can start small, choose to upgrade to other editions of Oracle Database 10g as demand grow, and move their applications to other editions without changes," the company noted.

The XE version delivers the same common SQL and PL/SQL interfaces seen in other versions of Oracle's 10g, and also has other programming interfaces to support different development communities.

Available on 32-bit Linux and Windows operating systems, XE can be installed on any supported hardware platform, according to Oracle. Novell and Red Hat will offer their users access to XE through their sales channels.

The move to create a free version of its database application falls in line with Oracle's larger strategy, which is to cater to multiple types of customers and help facilitate their transitions from one level to another.

"We focus on scalability, and that's one of the areas we're known for," said Mark Townsend, senior director of Oracle Database product management.

"We don't believe in making one kind of product for small businesses and another kind for large companies," he added. "Instead, we're interested in how companies grow, and giving them the flexibility you need to be scalable."

Microsoft May Expand Web-Based Offerings

Microsoft Corp. is widely expected to announce on Tuesday further forays into software and services that can be accessed over the Internet - a growing competitive arena that some say could eventually threaten Microsoft's biggest cash cows.

The Redmond-based software behemoth is facing increasing competition from companies such as Google Inc. and Yahoo Inc., which offer an array of free consumer services, and Salesforce.com and NetSuite Inc., which have had success with Web-based business offerings.

The concern is that applications including free e-mail and Web-based business products could eventually grow so broad and easy to use that people will begin to question why they are paying for Microsoft's two big moneymakers, the Windows operating system and Office business software suite.

Microsoft has already acknowledged that it must create more Web-based products if it wants to stay competitive. But analysts say that in doing so, the company must walk a delicate line of drawing consumers to its online offerings without taking business away from Windows and Office.

"What Microsoft has to do, arguably, is find way to recreate itself," said David Garrity, director of research with Investec's U.S. operations. "And unfortunately this process of recreation, if you will, potentially carries the risk with it of cannibalizing Microsoft's existing product offering."

Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates and one of its chief technical officers, Ray Ozzie, are hosting a Tuesday event in San Francisco in which many analysts expect to see more details of its strategy. A spokeswoman for Waggener Edstrom, Microsoft's public relations firm, declined to comment ahead of the event.

Rob Helm with independent researchers Directions on Microsoft expects the event will introduce products that complement the company's core software, such as ways for customers to save and keep track of files over the Internet.

Microsoft already has some Web-based offerings, such as its Hotmail e-mail system, Xbox Live videogame-play service and Web conferencing software.

But the company also has had some notable failures in the field. An ambitious plan, code-named Hailstorm, to store personal information such as passwords and credit card numbers was eventually all but scuttled after widespread privacy concerns. Another effort that focused on business products, bCentral, also encountered trouble.

While other companies may have found successful strategies faster, Helm said Microsoft, with around $40 billion in cash, has a potential advantage in that it doesn't necessarily need to make money from its online offerings.

Instead, he said, the company only needs to create products that will make people continue to want to buy Office and Windows.

"Microsoft can afford to keep coming back and coming back in this area until it finds a winning formula," he said.

Red Hat Outlines Future Plans for Linux

In outlining its plans for the near term, open-source specialist Red Hat said it will focus on integrating virtualization technology and support for "stateless" Linux in forthcoming versions of its enterprise product.

Set for debut in late 2006, the next major release of Red Hat Enterprise Linux will feature server virtualization capability, based on the Xen virtualization engine, to tailor the core operating-system platform for virtualized environments.

The result, the company said, is that customers will be able to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency.

Red Hat's pricing model for server virtualization technology will enable customers to run an unlimited number of virtualized instances for a flat subscription rate.

With stateless Linux, the characteristics and data that make an individual machine unique are moved to the network. Through intelligent backup and update agents, the user's personal preferences and other information can

be moved to any local machine.

The motivation for using stateless systems is that, much like the old client-server model or thin-client model, they can help reduce maintenance and deployment costs. If all user data is stored in a central location, it is, in theory, more easily accessible and is not reliant on a single desktop machine.

"It is clear that organizations are looking at ways to cut costs and make sure their investments offer immediate value," said IDC analyst Dan Kusnetzky. "Virtualization helps them achieve those goals by aggregating the workloads handled by older machines on a bigger machine."

The virtualization software and hardware markets are expanding at a rapid clip, Kusnetzky noted, because such technology lets businesses aggregate applications so they can coexist on the same server. Also, organizations need only one installation of any software application for the whole system.

With open-source Xen, customers can create virtual instances of an operating system that can be copied or transferred to a different computer. Kusnetsky compared Xen to VMware and Microsoft’s Virtual Server software, both of which can create an environment in which work is abstracted from the hardware, providing increased system scalability and reliability.

Similarly, with stateless Linux built in to the kernel, the operating system can be run on several clients in a virtual environment rather than as separate installations on individual machines, Kusnetzky explained, adding that Novell’s SuSE Linux has incorporated this capability in its latest enterprise product.

"This makes it much easier to move applications from one machine to another as the workload shifts," the analyst said.

Red Hat also said it will provide developers with open-source tools such as Eclipse, SystemTAP, and Frysk to foster the evolution of open-source technology for the enterprise.

Microsoft Plans Online Version of Windows

Microsoft Corp. on Tuesday announced online enhancements to its Windows operating system and other popular software programs, hoping to defuse a growing threat from Google Inc. and other fast-moving challengers.

With a new Web site called "Windows Live," Microsoft hopes to create a new platform that will unfasten some of its applications from a computer hard drive.

The change reflects Microsoft’s recognition of the growing demand for applications and services that can be used from any place, at any time, as the lines between the home and office blur and portable computing devices become more powerful.

"It’s a revolution in how we think about software," Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates told reporters and industry analysts Tuesday. "This is a big change for...every part of the ecosystem."

It’s Microsoft’s most aggressive push yet into online services, an area that’s being pioneered by search engine Google, portal leader Yahoo, Inc., and others.

Earlier this month, Google and Sun Microsystems Inc. said they would work together on online services, including office productivity software. Neither company, however, would discuss any details beyond a vague collaboration deal.

Microsoft was slightly more clear in its announcement.

Gates said neither Windows Live nor another service called Windows Office would replace the operating system or other popular applications, such as word processing and spreadsheets, sold on disks that are installed on individual hard drives.

Office Live, Microsoft said, will be targeted at the 28 million small business worldwide.

It will have elements that enhance regular Office applications while others will work independently of the software suite.

Some of the tools outlined Tuesday will help small businesses build an online presence as well as offer applications to automate tasks such as project management, expense reports and billing, among others.

"With Office Live services, we make complex technology affordable and easy to use for small businesses, empowering them to reach their business goals," said Rajesh Jha, general manager of Information Worker Services at Microsoft.

Office Live will be available as an invitation-only beta in early 2006.

In many cases, Windows Live - available at Live.com - will offer souped-up versions of services like online mapping and instant messaging that have long been available on Microsoft’s MSN.com, a heavily trafficked site that will continue to operate.

Microsoft also plans to continue to operate MSN.com, a heavily trafficked Web site that inspired many of the features included in the Windows Live Web site.

Windows Live will be offered for free and try to make money from the rapidly expanding online advertising market that has been fueling the explosive growth of Google and Yahoo, providing them with the financial and intellectual firepower to challenge the world’s largest software maker.

Microsoft also plans to charge monthly fees for some of the Live Office features aimed primarily at small businesses - a subscription model that has been a boon so far for online software pioneers like Salesforce.com Inc., NetSuite Inc. and RightNow Technologies Inc.

Password Keeper 2000

Independent software programmer Gregory Braun has updated his password-keeper software to version 6.9. Although the download is available to anyone with $20, Braun’s program is designed for home or business users

who need individual file security on a wide scale.

While most of us do not fit this description, those who do will find an easy-to-use password-storage program that is, above everything else, secure.

Password Keeper 6.9 looks like something from the Windows 95 era and, in this case, that is a good thing. The interface is very straightforward with no fancy graphics or unnecessary input fields. The program loads, asks you to identify a file, receives the respective passwords, and saves the information in an encrypted file.

There are a few dozen preferences and options you can customize, but the main screen includes nothing more than a few lines of text.

The program has not experienced many significant changes over the years - most recent releases were geared toward fixing minor bugs. Aside from adding compatibility with the Windows Add/Remove module, Braun kept Password Keeper simple and functional.

Its only purpose is to save multiple and frequently used passwords as well as credit-card information for Web surfing and online shopping.

This simplicity enables Password Keeper to excel in performance. It always will load, rarely will crash, and will keep your information secure.

During our test we stored dozens of password files and had no problem finding or editing any of them. Users who want to protect hundreds of files should encounter few difficulties.

Password Keeper 2000 v6.9

Pros: Very easy to use.

Cons: It’s about $5 to $10 more expensive than most password storage utilities.

Verdict: A reliable and secure password storage utility that takes up minimal computer resources.

Rating: 4.5 out of 5

Price: $19.95

www.gregorybraun.com/PassKeep.html

Man Is Sentenced in Phishing Fraud

A British man was sentenced to four years in jail Tuesday for masterminding a "phishing" fraud that stole identities and bank details from users of the eBay auction site.

Prosecutors said David Levi, 29, of Lytham, England, led a six-man gang that stole nearly 200,000 pounds ($360,000) from more than 160 people. They sent e-mails to eBay customers, pretending to be from eBay, asking for bank details.

Other gang members were sentenced to jail terms ranging from six months to two years.

"This was a coordinated and sophisticated fraud which took place over a 12-month period which required a determined and calculated approach," said Judge Phillip Sycamore, presiding in Preston Crown Court.

"A large number of people lost a significant amount of money, and it is quite apparent that the use of a fraudulent eBay site was quite sophisticated," Sycamore said.

In phishing schemes, fraudsters typically bait victims with e-mails purportedly from legitimate online businesses. The e-mails direct recipients to bogus Web sites, where they are asked to re-input information such as credit card numbers and passwords.

Levi, who was already serving a sentence for drug offenses, was sentenced to three years for fraud and one year for perverting the course of justice, to be served consecutively. His brother Guy Levi, 22, was jailed for 21 months after pleading guilty to conspiracy to defraud.

Daniel Lett, 22, was sentenced to two years for conspiracy to defraud.

Derek Anderson, 59, Chris Worden, 23, Craig Jameson, 31, and Gareth Rice, 22, were each jailed for six months on money laundering charges.

Court Hears Internet Anonymity Case

The publisher of a financial newsletter told Maryland’s second highest court Wednesday that he should not be forced to disclose his subscriber list and other information sought by an Arizona company seeking those it says made defamatory online comments.

The publisher, Timothy M. Mulligan, told the judges "almost everything we publish could potentially be subpoenaed," putting him in the position of constantly appearing for depositions if his request to quash a subpoena by the Arizona drug company, Matrixx Initiatives, is denied.

The judges, however, appeared to side with Matrixx, repeatedly asking why Mulligan should not appear for the deposition and invoke his right not to reveal his subscribers and sources under Maryland’s so-called "Shield Law," which protects the rights of the press.

"My sense is it didn’t go well," Mulligan said after the hearing.

"It’s not clear yet, but it will probably be in litigation for years because I have no intention of giving up my sources or subscribers."

After the hearing, Matrixx attorney David Tobin said "no one has the right to make defamatory comments. That is not protected speech."

Internet postings have become the subject of a number of court battles, especially in cases where they have affected the stock prices of companies. Free speech advocates have also become involved and the issue has even entered the political arena in Maryland.

Joseph F. Steffen Jr., a former aide to Republican Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich

Jr., resigned last winter after it was revealed that he had posted rumors about Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley's personal life on Internet chat sites. O'Malley is seeking the Democratic nomination for governor and would face Ehrlich in the general election if he wins.

Tobin told the court it was unclear whether Mulligan could invoke the shield law.

"That's the white elephant in the room," the Matrixx attorney told the judges.

Mulligan said appearing constantly for depositions could hamper his ability to make a living, especially since his newsletter reports on questionable accounting practices by companies. The judges later asked Tobin how many depositions Mulligan would have to sit through.

"Hopefully, one," Tobin responded.

In response to the first subpoena by Matrixx, Mulligan two years ago turned over nearly 400 pages of documents, which he said was mainly source material for his report. He has refused to comply with a second subpoena seeking, among other things, his subscriber list and any contacts with an anonymous poster to Internet messages boards known as "TheTruthseeker."

However, Montgomery County Circuit Judge Eric M. Johnson denied Mulligan's request to quash the second subpoena and Mulligan appealed to the Court of Special Appeals.

Matrixx claims the postings are part of a scheme to drive down the company's stock, benefiting traders who sell short, or borrow shares and repay them at a later time, hopefully when the price has dropped.

The company filed a defamation lawsuit in Arizona in 2002, naming two dozen John and Jane Does as defendants. Matrixx has also been battling lawsuits claiming its Zicam Cold Remedy nasal gel causes permanent loss of smell and taste.

Mulligan has said he doesn't know the anonymous posters and doesn't think he should answer further questions. He is fighting the subpoena with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Privacy Information Center, Public Citizen and other advocacy groups

Tobin, however, said the issue was merely one of discovery, the legal method of obtaining the facts in a dispute and not a precedent-setting First Amendment case.

The company "simply wants to know what Mr. Mulligan might know" about the online postings, Tobin said.

Bird Flu Inspires PC Virus

Virus writers, forever in search of opportunities to distribute their malicious code, are exploiting interest in the avian flu by circulating an e-mail with an attachment that contains information about the bird flu epidemic - and a Trojan horse tucked inside.

The Naiva.A Trojan horse masquerades as a Word document with subject lines

such as "Outbreak in North America" and "What is avian influenza (bird flu)?"

"Using the bird flu is a very clever way of drawing attention and enticing those PC users less knowledgeable or concerned about security to open the attachment," said Jeanine Rother, a virus researcher at the German subsidiary of Panda Software, which is based in Spain. "Although users are constantly being told not to open attachments from unknown sources, some are likely to ignore these warnings because of their interest in the epidemic and potential threat to their own lives."

Rother was unable to say how many computers have been so far infected with the Trojan horse, which the company detected in its virus lab.

Panda Software has given the malware a low-risk rating in its posted security update.

The Trojan horse uses two Word macros to run and install a second threat on the computer. The first macro enables the Trojan horse to modify, create, and delete files. The second macro installs Ranky.FY on computers. Ranky.FY allows hackers to gain remote control of infected computers.

Panda Software urges users to set their macro security level at medium to receive a warning when a macro is run, or on high to stop macros from running altogether.

The Naiva-A Trojan comes on the heels of numerous spam e-mail distributions that promote the sale of Tamiflu, the drug believed to be most effective at protecting humans for the H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus.

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